

VZCZCXRO1222  
PP RUEHQU  
DE RUEHPU #0900/01 1391851  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 191851Z MAY 06  
FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3080  
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE  
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA 1052  
RUEHNY/AMEMBASSY OSLO 0768  
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA 0897  
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 0287  
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC 0475  
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0901  
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 PORT AU PRINCE 000900

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/17/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KDEM](#) [EAID](#) [HA](#)  
SUBJECT: HAITI ELECTIONS: WHERE ARE WE AND WHAT NEXT

REF: PORT-AU-PRINCE 828

Classified By: Ambassador Janet A. Sanderson for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: With the successful presidential inauguration and nearly 90 percent of legislators seated, Haiti's electoral process is almost completed. Municipal (mayoral) and local elections remain requiring only a relative majority and therefore just one round. Additionally, three remaining Senate seats and 11 Deputy contests must be decided. Despite the success of the process thus far and the positive momentum generated, several issues remain to be resolved in order to bring the process to a conclusion. The single most critical issue is one of a projected budget gap of at least USD 10 million necessary to hold the municipal and local elections. The Provisional Electoral Council (CEP) Director General (DG) Jacques Bernard and the CEP counselors are anxious to move ahead and hold the remaining elections. MINUSTAH technical staff, however, are advocating a scenario which postpones the pending contests until the fall. Regardless of the timing, there appears to be a growing consensus that the running of the municipal and local elections can be separated with the 1435 local contests deferred and combined with the Senate election in late 2007. We are pressing our interlocutors at all levels to complete the electoral process at least through the municipal seats as soon as possible, preferably by July. End Summary.

#### Current Situation

12. (C) Subsequent to reftel, one further deputy race was finalized. Patrick Brutus, Lespwa, won the seat in President Preval's home district (circonscription) of Saint Michel/Marmelade, Artibonite Department. Lespwa now has 20 seats in the 87-member Chamber of Deputies. The result in the April 21 first round re-run in Verrettes district, Artibonite Department, is pending the conclusion of a CEP investigation resulting from claims of widespread fraud. CEP counselor Josefa Gauthier told poloff that the outcome will likely be another first round contest necessary in Verrettes as is the case of a third Artibonite district, Grand Saline. At least eleven second round races including the Senate race in the North East Department remain to be held in order to complete the National Assembly's total complement of 129 members.

Different Views on Timing, One Voice on Budget Shortfall

CEP Director General

¶3. (C) DG Bernard told poloff May 11 that the "bare minimum" he required to complete the legislative races and hold the municipal elections by mid-July was USD 10 million. He said that preparations and plans for these elections were laid and could be set in motion if additional funding becomes available. With the current available funding, Bernard said he has enough to keep the electoral machinery in place and running only until the end of June. After that time, all election administration staff would be dismissed and offices closed without any provision for an orderly dismantling of the electoral machinery so painstakingly constructed since Bernard's became the DG in October 2005. (Note: Bernard promised poloff an annotated budget outlining his requirements. However, the document was not completed prior to his recent temporary departure from Haiti. End Note.)

¶4. (C) Bernard strongly advocated holding the municipal elections in conjunction with the remaining legislative races. He outlined the persuasive argument regarding the importance of elected mayors versus appointed mayors. The mayors in the 142 delimited collectivities are responsible for collection of certain local tax revenue. An elected mayor is responsible to his or her constituents to use the local taxes for the local community. In the case where mayors are appointed by the Minister of Interior (and Collectivities), the mayors are less accountable to the local population and are, in fact, beholden to the Minister of the Interior for their position who expects the majority of collected revenues to be forwarded to Port-au-Prince for inclusion in the central Interior Ministry's budget. This

PORT AU PR 00000900 002 OF 003

practice undermines the decentralization envisioned in the 1987 Constitution and sabotages provision of basic services and possible community development projects.

¶5. (C) Local elections Bernard maintained were not as critical as the municipals as the positions lack the noted financial concern. Additionally, Bernard confirmed that the results of the local elections would result in 7000-plus elected officials all of whom would expect a government supported salary as well as associated benefits. It would be difficult for the beleaguered Haitian government budget to absorb that amount of civil servants as it already unable to pay those currently employed. He opined that President Preval would likely appreciate not having that burden added to the state budget. Bernard also mentioned some technical electoral aspects that would need to be addressed prior to holding local elections. Ideally, some re-districting of collectivities/communes is required. Any re-drawing of local-level district lines would necessitate revision of the associated voter lists. Also, at present there is not an identified voting center in each commune. Bernard suggested that the local elections be postponed to allow for the major technical issues to be resolved and for the elections to be held at the end of 2007 when the first third of the Senate is re-newed for six years. Bernard claimed that the 1987 Constitution went too far in trying to ensure democracy and contained the "seeds of its own destruction" with the cumbersome and unwieldy local government structure.

MINUSTAH Election Support Unit

¶6. (C) MINUSTAH's Election Support Unit (ESU) prepared an options papers in which it advocated delaying the pending legislative and municipal elections until the September-November timeframe. (Comment: DG Bernard did not openly oppose or contradict the MINUSTAH plan but clearly tried to distance himself from its conclusions. End comment.) ESU chief Gerardo LeChevallier outlined the conditions associated with the delay. First and foremost, LeChevallier is adamant about the necessity of replacing the current CEP immediately. Citing the April 4th (2004)

Agreement, he maintained that the CEP's mandate had expired with Preval's assumption of power May 14. In the opinion of the ESU, this issue, in addition to general incompetence and the difficulty of working with the nine current members, is sufficient to replace the current CEP. While the "white paper" paper did provide the gamut of possible options, it did not include a projected budget for its recommendation to delay the elections until November while right-sizing the CEP staff and keeping those most competent and qualified. (Note: While the paper suggests a timeframe of September-to-November, in discussions with poloff LeChevallier clearly expected a November date to be the most likely scenario. End Note.) Additionally, the ESU wants the registration process re-opened to allow for the registration of an ESU-estimated one million persons including those who have turned 18 since voter registration was completed.

#### Provisional Electoral Council

¶7. (C) The CEP is trying to move forward and at least schedule the remaining legislative races, the "third" (troisieme) round for late June or early July. The counselors recognize the budget shortfall and requested funding from the interim Minister of Finance. Additionally, they have requested a meeting with President Preval to engage his assistance in concluding the election process. In contrast to the CEP DG and MINUSTAH, the CEP members do not seem to have contemplated splitting the local elections out from the municipal contests. However, Gauthier was supportive of the idea in a May 16 exchange with poloff and offered to facilitate poloff's further discussions with her CEP colleagues.

#### Other Donors

¶8. (SBU) In a May 9 electoral donors meeting, poloff joined counterparts from Canada and the EU in calling for a formal budget request from MINUSTAH ESU and the CEP. Without the underlying specific and formalized request outlining the rationale and necessity for the assistance, the

\*\*\*\*\*  
\* Missing Section 003 \*  
\*\*\*\*\*